



“C. L. SCAMPER.”

“NOW, DON'T YOU CALL HIM A PERFECT PICTURE?”
“WELL, IT SEEMS TO ME THE PICTURE IS SPOILT BY SO MUCH FRAMEWORK.”

ELECTION NOTES.

(By our Imaginative Reporter.)

Swampshire. No go Division. — Mr. BOUNDER, the great capitalist (who has been moving heaven and earth during the last few years to get a constituency) has been invited to stand by the Local Council. Despite his ignorance of politics, it is confidently anticipated by his supporters that he will secure a majority at the General Election, provided there is no candidate on the other side, and the Corrupt Practices Act is not absurdly pressed.

Dullborough. — This thriving manufacturing town has been suddenly visited by its Member, Mr. EASYMAN, who is developing quite a feverish interest in local affairs. He seemed annoyed that no one recognised him as he drove through the streets, but, as the venerable local agent explained, another generation had arisen since he was last there. A hostile rumour has been circulated that Mr. EASYMAN had to hunt up the geographical position of his constituency in a Bradshaw before coming down. The Member has met this foolish report by opening two bazaars, subsidizing a football and polo club, and by handsomely subscribing to the local hospital which stands in no need of funds.

Whifton-on-Sea. — The electors here were first reminded of the fact that a general election was in the near distance, by the excessive amiability of their Member, Mr. CACKLE. This reached a climax last week, when in one day he shook hands effusively with forty working men, who subsequently turned out to be excursionists. The other party are asking nasty questions about why his name only appears in ten divisions during last session, and how it is that although he speaks of the breathless attention with which Englishmen have scanned the political horizon, he was away at Monte Carlo during all the important debates. In answer, Mr. CACKLE triumphantly points out that he spent so much anxious thought over the Bill for the Better Preservation of Bloaters, in which Whifton was deeply concerned, that his Doctor had insisted upon his taking a holiday. He reminds them that local interests had not suffered since he has been Member and that he had been instrumental (though how, was somewhat obscure) in getting the London Creeper and Crawly Railway to construct a new line to Whifton.

Heckleton. — A large mass meeting was held in the Town Hall last night when Mr. NTRIMMER, M.P., addressed his constituents. The important thing in politics, he said, was to avoid coming to a decided

opinion on any subject. In all crucial divisions he made it a point to walk out. There was, he felt, so much to be said on both sides that were one party to reject him he would feel no scruple in standing for the other—just to show from what a broad, philosophical standpoint he viewed political problems.

THE PRESS DEPRESSED.

I MET an aged gentleman
Who scribbled for the Press,
Who greeted me in accents sad,
And evident distress.
Cried he: “The Public Palate, Sir,
I’ve tickled now for years,
With a very pliant goosequill—
(And a pair of office shears).

“I mind the time when I could write,
With unimpassioned pen,
Events of general interest that
Took place within my ken.
And though the time is distant, Sir,
I recollect the days
When readers were contented
With truth in simple phrase.

“But now your paper you may print,
But who the deuce will buy it?
No one! unless you can concoct
A strong, unwholesome diet.
Trustworthy news is out of date
And nobody will take it,
Unless you get a practised hand
Judiciously to fake it.

“The consequence is simply this—
I don’t think there’s a question—
But everyone is suffering
From mental indigestion.
’Tis Nature’s law that every boom
Is followed by a slump;
As states of wildest rapture are
Succeeded by the hump.

“And thus the Public appetite
Has been so grossly sated,
That now it just declines to have
Its palate titillated.
’Tis sick of national affairs
However large they loom,
’Tis tired of the windy puff
And double head-line boom.

“To such a pitch the thing has got,
That people now refuse
To read a word about the Boers
Or glance at Chinese news.
The only thing that keeps us from
Going bankrupt altogether,
Is printing long reports of the
Unprecedented weather.”

VERY THOUGHTFUL.

Mrs. Slamcoe (to her husband). PICKFORD’S have just delivered a heavy case containing what I take to be tin kettles.

Mr. Slamcoe. No, dear, it’s my new suit of armour. I’ve determined to contest Puddlebury in the Liberal interest.



PRESENCE OF MIND.

Little Girl (who has been disturbed by a Mouse, in a stage-whisper to her sleeping sister). "WAKE UP! OH, WAKE UP AND MEW, AMY; MEW FOR YOUR LIFE!!"

FROM NOR'-WESTERN LATITUDES.

On dit (about September 12th). That Royal yacht *Victoria and Albert* had gone on to Fort William, whence the Princess CHRISTIAN and daughters were to climb the giddy height of Ben Nevis; a practical illustration of the "Royal Assent"; only that this would be given to a "Ben" instead of a "Bill." If, however, Her Royal Highness learned in time, as of course she would, what a regular Pilgrim's Penitential Progress the ascent of Ben Nevis is, and if it were further explained to Her Royal Highness that time would not suffice to properly roll the mountain path and lay down red baize from base to summit, then it is highly probable that H.R.H. Princess CHRISTIAN and daughters would be contented with the splendid, and to me personally, all-sufficing, view of the mountain obtainable from Banavie where, with good binoculars, the mountain can be brought close to Mahomet, instead of Mahomet having to go to the mountain.

From Banavie, and for some distance along the Caledonian Canal, the views of our exalted friend Ben are magnificent.

A propos of Ben Nevis, and of all mountains, the great point is to get a clear day for a view. If you do not object to a very rough road, and if you happen to be wearing boots that will be all the better for a climb of some few miles, then "Excelsior, Excelsior, Excelsior!" up you go! and you'll "have a summit to say for yourself" when once more you return

to plain-living people. Probably you will murmur "Never again with you, Ben!"

Scotland offers peculiar advantages to members of the Theatrical Profession, who either for charitable purposes or personal advantages, are always getting up "Bens." Of these, Ben Nevis is about the biggest "Ben." Here a shilling is demanded (when you are about a third of the way up, and can't well retrace your steps, at least, not without injury to your reputation as a hardy mountaineer), for admission to the upper circle, and on the summit everything is naturally enough at "a top price." To what fund this collection at the doors goes, I don't know; certainly, I should say it is not applied to keeping in good order the pathway. The motto of these mountain guardians must be, "Take care of the shillings and the 'Bens' will take care of themselves."

From Oban to Banavie.—It strikes me that Banavie Hotel would put the surliest and dampest traveller in a good temper should he happen to arrive just an hour or so before dinner (they manage these matters uncommonly well in Scotland where the motto of the steamboat time-table, and of most hotel managers, is never "Dinner forget"), and should he also have ordered, most wisely, his room, or rooms, beforehand; and, by "beforehand," I mean some three or four days ahead. If he has not taken this precaution he may be doomed to disappointment and have to travel back again to Fort William, where there are more hotels than one. The Banavie Hotel is excellent, and the manager and manageress have a way with them that, like music, "hath charms to soothe the troubled breast" of the rejected wanderer. How different to some hotels on a popular Continental route, where, within my personal experience, an official, unbending manner, or a brusque negative, was all the irritating substitute for civility! And that hard-mannered man was a German. Yet this manager is a foreigner; a German, if neither of my ears is playing me false. He has a way of saying "No, Sir," or "No, my Lady," or "No, Ma'am," with so honest a manner, so frank a smile, and at the same time in so sympathetic a tone that the rejected one feels sure that, if he cannot obtain what he would have, and if his application is dismissed as utterly hopeless, yet that he has enlisted the sympathies of a good and worthy soul representing authority, and is, so far, comforted, feeling that the hotel-manager "would if he could, but if he can't how can he?" Ah! 'tis a great art to be a popular hotel-keeper; to be everything to everybody, to welcome the coming paying-guest heartily, while dismissing the rejected guest courteously. This talent do the Baron and Baroness of BANAVIE both possess. The house is up-to-date in every respect; the service excellent; and perfection could be easily obtained if—other matters being as they are—the subject of menus for dinner were henceforth made the manager's chief care and artistic study. He will have leisure to meditate on this during the winter. Soup, fish, *entrée*, *pièce de résistance*, a vegetable à part, and a chicken, or curried something, or game of some sort, et "La Sweet," etc., etc., such is the skeleton menu. The "Banavie" is civilised, and does not insist on the temporary separation of the sexes after dinner in order that the gentlemen may be banished to a dreary smoking-room, which is a remnant of barbarism soon to disappear from all hotels. So, to travellers by this route, I say "Put in here: The 'Banavie,' c'est mon avis."

Then, what splendid views of Ben Nevis (poor "Big Ben" in London, hung up there and compelled to remain aloft all the year round, how you would enjoy the change!) and of many other Bens, big and little, as we steam along the Caledonian Canal towards Fort Augustus. But all that I can tell you, and more, is it not written in the Guide Books of Scotland, by MURRAY, BLACK, and in that most portable and most useful of all, a little well-printed, well-illustrated, well-written, sixpenny guide to Oban and all the tours roundabout, published by MACKAY? That's the book to suit the pocket in every

sense. Go through it carefully and you'll have done all that is worth doing, and seen everything worth seeing, in this part of the Highlands.

At one of the locks is a Highlander playing the bag-pipes. He marches up and down and skirls. I don't know what reel it is, but he doesn't change it and try another. Rather MacMonotonous. "Who pays the piper, calls the tune." True. If I could call a tune, I would pay the piper and call another air while breath remains in the piper's body. His repertoire must be limited. For instance, it would be no use expecting him to play the march from *Norma*, an air from *Dinorah*, or "*Home, sweet Home*," on the bag-pipes. Not much sweetness would be left in the last mentioned tune. The boat moves slowly forward, and we leave him taking his blow out and marching up and down at the rate of six miles an hour. A feeling of shame steals over me: MacPiper thinks he has been delighting us, and we have evinced no gratitude. As we very, very slowly glide out between the lock-gates, I extract coppers from depths of pocket and shower them upon him. One touch of nature makes everybody else shower coppers. The pipes stop. He is busily engaged. "PETER PIPER picks up a peck of pennies; If PETER PIPER picks up a peck of pennies, what will PETER PIPER spend in drink?" Play on Piper! the money won't run to a pint of "Piper" (*très sec*).

A DRAWBACK.

[A correspondent to a morning paper complains that no guide-books can be procured at the Zoological Gardens on Sunday.]

My features wore a cheerful grin,
And, blithe and happy as a lark,
I strolled beside my sweetheart in
The neighbourhood of Regent's Park.

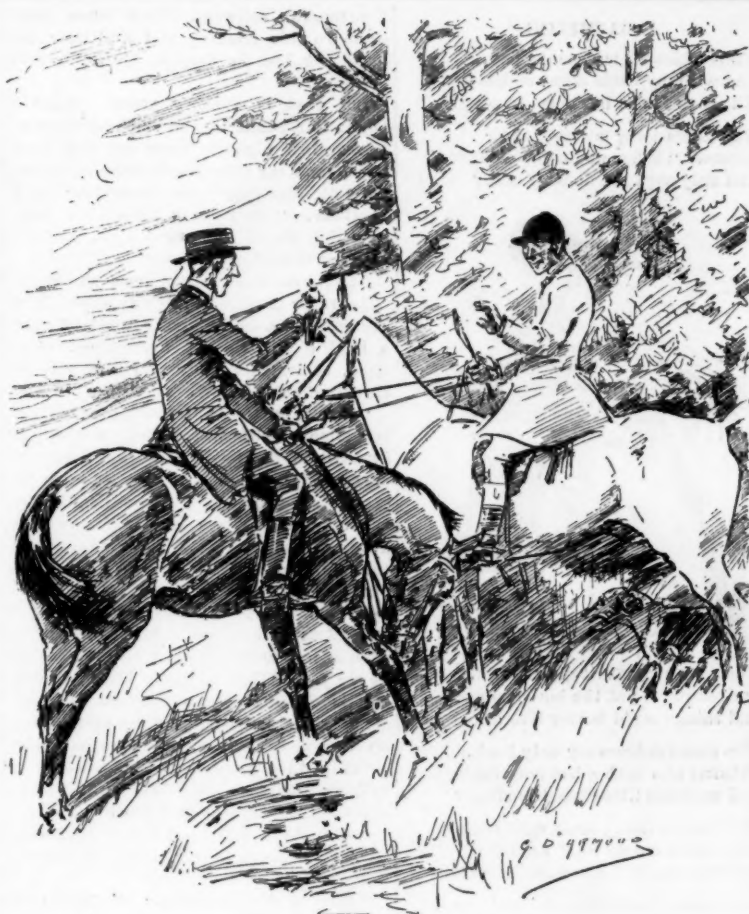
I blessed the thoughtful person who
Had granted me a priceless boon;
A Fellow's ticket for the Zoo
Upon that Sunday afternoon.

"O maiden mine, whom I adore!"
I cried, "Do you anticipate
The pleasures that there are in store
When once we get inside the gate?"

"How sweet to wander side by side,
And in the reptile house to brood;
Or see the lions satisfied
With raw, unpalatable food."

I paused when I had got thus far,
And she observed, with sober face,
"The animals you mention are
Particularly commonplace."

"I've seen them all; so I propose
To-day we leave them quite alone,
And for a change we'll study those
Whose ways are not so widely known."



CUB HUNTING.

Sporting Parson (whose flask is usually cold coffee). "HAVE A DRINK, TOM?"
Tom (who has been there before). "NO, THANK YE, SIR. I DON'T THINK AS 'OW THAT BROWN SHERRY O' YOURS EXACTLY SUITS ME IN THE MORNING!"

"More intimate I'd gladly get
With these," and then she mentioned
two.

One was, I think, the marmoset;
I'm sure the other was the gnu.

Now, truth to tell, I did not care
To strike such unfamiliar ground—
I'd not the faintest notion where
These animals were to be found.

But difficulties I defied,
Although my brain was in a fog;
Resolving, when I got inside,
That I would buy a catalogue.

Alas! it really was too bad;
I found, when I'd the turnstile passed,
There were no guide-books to be had—
No wonder that I stood aghast.

We wandered high, we wandered low,
We also wandered round and round,
Deciphering the labels;—no!
Those animals could not be found.

We wandered till our limbs were stiff,
And still we wandered on, and I'm
Not sure what would have happened if
It had not been their closing time.

And oh! my sweetheart *was* upset
Because she could not interview
The fascinating marmoset,
The extraordinary gnu!

* * *
O patrons of the Zoo, at least
Be warned, for it is none too soon;
Don't seek an unfamiliar beast
Upon a Sunday afternoon.

THREE REASONS FOR A DISSOLUTION.

1. BECAUSE the Government has an enormous majority in both Houses of Parliament.

2. Because there is no Opposition worth looking at.

3. Because partridge shooting has been so bad this year.

A BACHELOR.

Who collars all my scanty pay,
And with my little plans makes hay?
Who says Mama has come to stay?

Who takes away my easy chair
Because "it has no business there,"
And only says she doesn't care?



Who says she hasn't got a gown,
And wants to put the horses down,
And thinks we'd better live in town?

Who commandeers my only hack,
Returns him with a bad sore back,
And says the little beast is slack?

Who thinks that I must ride a bike
And makes me do what I don't like,
And tells me if I don't she'll strike?

And when I'm feeling sad and low
Who sympathises with my woe
And softly breathes, "I told you so"?
NO ONE!

A CAPER IN THE "CAPERCAILZIE."

LEAVES FROM THE LOG OF TOBY, M.P.

Second Leaf.

Saturday. Oban.—Back here for letters and papers. Much struck in smoking-room last night at resources and tact of our host, temporarily in charge, in absence of his noble father. Topic of railway experience started in conversation. Began to relate mine in coming up from London on Tuesday night. As far north as Edinburgh arrangements left nothing to be desired. Great Northern Road, as is its custom not only of an afternoon, in perfect condition; keeps it up through full range of twenty-four hours; sleeping berth as snug as one's own bedroom; no climbing into shelves in closely packed car, perilously undressing and dressing behind curtains; for extra payment of ten shillings get first-class compartment made up with two comfortable beds. Often wonder what foreigners accustomed to extravagant charges for sleeping accommodation on

Continental railways think when they come to this country and find they get excellent bed in express train for five shillings.

But that is another story. What I began to recount in the smoking-room at anchor last night in dark and still Loch Duich, was my experience after changing train at Edinburgh and proceeding north to Oban. "Only once before," I said, "coming South on same line, have I suffered in similar fashion."

At this moment a cork from one of the soda-water bottles on the tray over which the host presided suddenly went off with a loud plop. This disconcerting: managed, after brief pause, to pick up the thread of narrative.

"On this line," I continued, "the traveller soon begins to take keen personal interest in the number of the family of successive Station-masters. Running in connection with express from London the Oban train makes a point of stopping at every station. That a little trying to the impetuous mind; peculiarity of the system is the leisure of the re-start. No apparent reason why, when one passenger has got in or one has got out, the train should not move onward. That would never do. What happens is that guard strolls in direction of station-master, meditative in doorway of booking-office; no hurry in movement; pauses occasionally to admire natural beauties of railway station; has certainly come across them before; but fresh view develops; stops and studies it; continues advance towards booking-office; conversation opens.

"Here's where number of family on either side becomes a factor in the scheme of the express passenger for Oban. Guard broaches conversation by enquiring after health of station-master's wife. Interest on this point assuaged, begins with eldest son and daughter; goes all through list to latest born. If any are married and have children, field of inquiry extended. Station-master in turn politely takes up quest of information as to health and welfare of every member of guard's family and collaterals. From seven to ten minutes being thus occupied, guard, in moment of abstraction turning his head, observes the train, express from King's Cross 8.45 p.m., standing in the station. Suggests idea to him. Suppose he starts it?

"Waves a flag; nothing happens. After due interval, whistles; engine-driver, roused from deep contemplation, looks up. At this moment guard observes two boxes on platform where, indeed, they have stood since, ten minutes ago, train came in; approaches; examines labels; strolls over to station-master, still lingering in doorway of ticket office; further conversation ensues. Station-master goes off in search of porter; comes back with two; group form round the boxes; regard them with

melancholy interest; labels freshly examined; a long pause; station-master says something to porters; they lift one box at a time, slowly convey it towards luggage van; station-master and guard follow with bowed heads, as if the box contained mortal remains of esteemed director of the railway."

Here I was startled by cork of another soda-water bottle popping. Most extraordinary. Looked at host; observed him frowning, winking, and making other mysterious signals. Threw me and my story quite off the rail, so to speak. Someone else chipped in; lost opportunity of pointing out how, same kind of thing happening at every station, train was more than hour late arriving at Oban.

"What did you mean by popping off those corks?" I asked when we were alone.

"Why, don't you know?" he said. "McTAVISH, who was glaring at you all the time you were speaking, is a Director of the railway."

I certainly didn't. But for the sake of fellow men travelling to and from Oban, I'm not sorry he heard me.

AN AWFUL SECRET.

MY own, you have called me your poet,
And poet I certainly am;

What use to pretend not to know it?

I spurn such an obvious sham.

I know that each letter I write you

Is full of the tenderest thought,

I know that the verse I indite you

Is simply deliciously wrought.

My ecstasy over a flower,

My beautiful love of the Spring,

The rapture I find in a shower

That "gently refreshes the ling"—



You ask where on earth I discover
These visions abundantly fair,
When you know that your toil-driven
lover

Has diggings in Bloomsbury Square?

I'll tell you my secret, my darling;

My talk of the petals that close,

My odes to the flight of a starling,

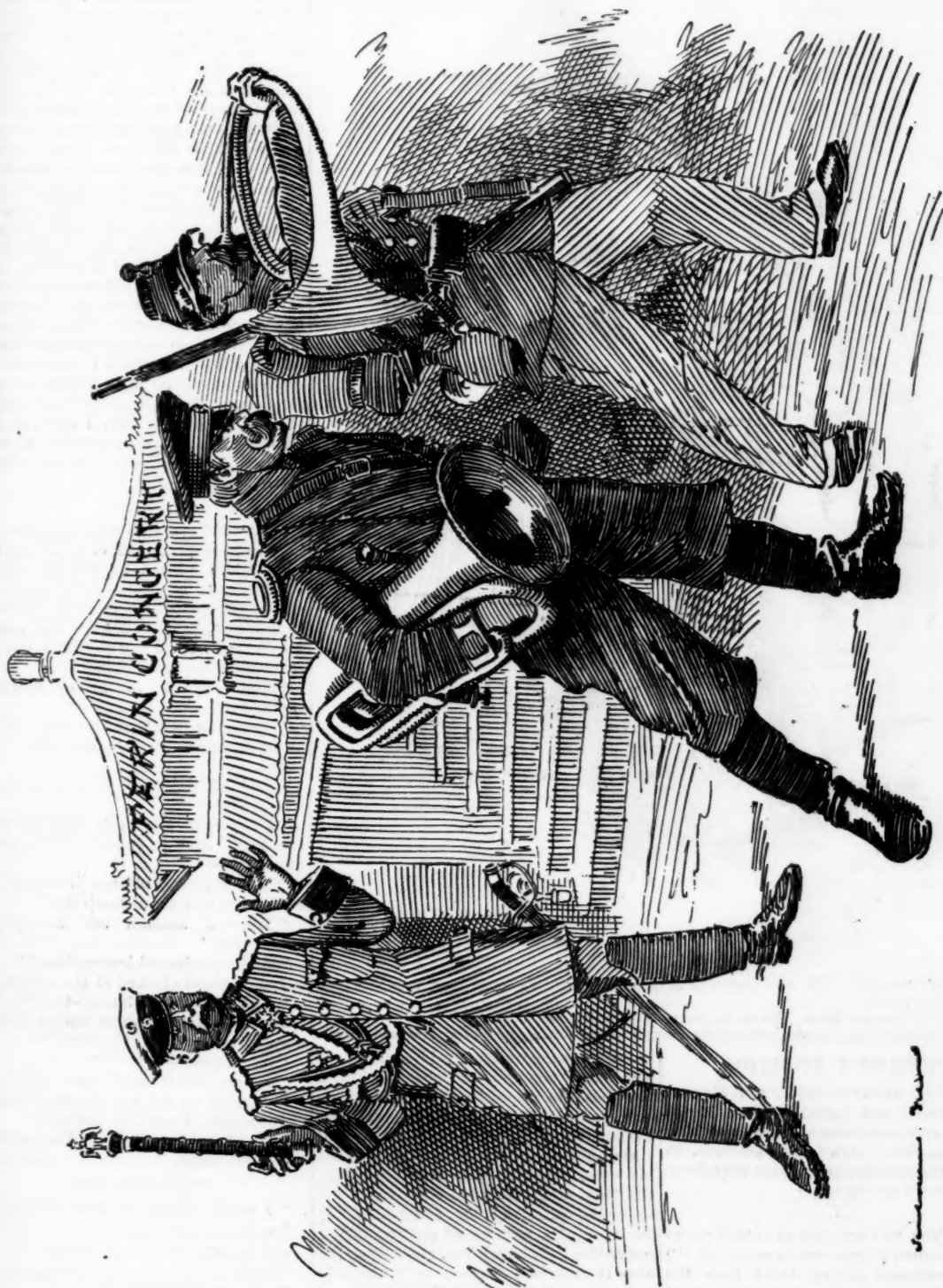
My stanzas in praise of a rose

All spring from my fancy—my living,

From the rise of the sun till it sets,

I earn by my energies giving

To fashioning cheap novelettes!



LEAVING THE CONCERT.

Waldree. "WHAT! GOING AWAY! DORNERWEITER! WHY, I HAVE ONLY JUST ARRIVED TO CONDUCT YOU!"



Squire's Daughter. "DO YOU THINK IT IS QUITE HEALTHY TO KEEP YOUR PIGS SO CLOSE TO THE COTTAGE?"
Hodge. "I DUNNO, MISS. NOAN OF THER PIGS AIN'T EVER BIN ILL!"

PENMEN'S POLITICS.

THE daily papers announce that Messrs. CONAN DOYLE and "ANTHONY HOPE" will contest constituencies at the approaching election. They have failed, however, to report the speeches from which the following extracts are taken:—

I.

... You will not fail to return me as your Member. (*Cheers: and a voice, "Oh!"*) The gentleman sitting third from the end in the fourteenth row says "Oh!" ("Shame!") Shall I tell you why? Because he has been bribed by his sister-

in-law to support my rival! (*Sensation.*) Yes, I saw him this afternoon smoking a new imitation-meerschaum pipe. Now, no man ever bought an imitation-meerschaum. Clearly, therefore, it was a present, and a present from a lady. That lady was not his wife, who disapproves of smoking. His only other feminine relative is his sister-in-law. And his sister-in-law is the wife of a member of my opponent's committee! (*Uproar.*) Yes, gentlemen, the case is complete. Bribed by a beggarly gift—from a glimpse I had of the pipe I learnt that it had been in stock for a long time, and had been reduced from 3s. 7d., its

original price, to 2s. 5½d.—bribed, I say, by this beggarly gift, the gentleman has the effrontery to come here and raise his voice against my candidature! (*Cheers, and cries of "Turn him out!"*) And now to say a few words of my opponent. I chanced to see him enter his committee-room to-day. For perhaps fifteen seconds he stood in the full glare of my inductive glance. What did those fifteen seconds reveal? That he makes a false income-tax return, does not pay his tailor's bill, eats bacon without mustard, collects postage-stamps, only writes to his aged mother on the second Monday in each month, is an anti-vivisectionist, and is suffering from over-indulgence in baked potatoes! (*Sensation.*) Yes, that was what I learnt in fifteen seconds. But soon I hope to study him for a full minute, and then, gentlemen, you shall know the result! (*Laughter and cheers.*) But in the light of what the most simple inductive process has demonstrated already, is such a man, I ask you confidently, worthy to represent a free, glorious, and enlightened constituency? (*Prolonged cheers.*)

II.

... "and apply, in a word, to our own Empire those principles of sound government which proved in the instance of Ruritania so beneficial to the State and so gratifying to the people." (*Loud cheers.*) A gentleman in the audience then rose to ask the candidate a few questions, and the following colloquy took place.)

"You are in favour of universal suffrage?"

"There is much to be said for it—unfortunately," the candidate conceded.

"And of marriage with a deceased wife's sister?"

"I have not been privileged to meet the lady. And to predict the feminine unknown—"

"You support old-age pensions administered by local authorities?"

"Yes—if authors are among the authorities."

"And a graduated income-tax?"

The candidate looked at the ceiling.

"And a graduated income-tax?"

The candidate prodded the table with his stylograph.

"And a grad—"

"Excuse me," said the candidate.

"I've used up my two thousand words for to-night. I can only add???"

"!!!!" said the voter. The meeting then terminated.

A. C. D.

A SHORT RHYME OF WESTMINSTER.

BIG Ben's goin' agen
 But he only strikes, when he likes,
 Waitin', maybe, the time when he'll see
 The incomin' Parliament men.
 He knows the voice of the popular choice
 Does old Big Ben!

RELICTA NON BENE PARMULA.

"FATE, I assure you, will defend
The cause for which I daily pray;
A week or two will see the end,"
Asseverated Mr. K.

"Be not afraid—if still they stand,
Though lengthy Toms about them play,
Their house is only built on sand,"
Expostulated Mr. K.

"Not one step nearer can they march,
My mercenaries bar the way,
And I myself, as stiff as starch,"
Protested valiant Mr. K.

"Whate'er betide, come weal or woe,
Depend upon it, here I stay
To strike one last tremendous blow,"
Vociferated Mr. K.

* * * * *
"A tide's in the affairs of man,
I'm off to Delagoa Bay;
You'd better do the best you can"—
Oh, Mr. K.! Oh, Mr. K.!

CARPINGS.

[A Western farmer is said to have used bees as letter-carriers. The letters were reduced by microphotography, and gummed to the back of the bee.—*Daily Paper*.]

How doth the little busy bee
Improve its shining wing,
And by microphotography
Our correspondence bring?

How doth she learn the artful knack,
While flying far and near,
To make the packet on her back
Still manage to adhere?

How doth the bee-keeper contrive,
When her long flight is o'er,
To pitch upon her in the hive
Out of ten thousand more?

How doth—? but for the present,
till

First these few points I know,
For business purposes I'll still
Prefer the G. P. O.

SONG OF THE POT-BOILER.

My grate was cold and rusty,
And in the lifeless pot
That once was full and lusty
The water bubbled not.

My last small spark had dwindled,
I'd raked the ash in vain,
When, lo! Bellona kindled
Her fiery torch in again.

I marked the blazing nation,
The flames uprearing high,
And "On this conflagration
I'll boil my pot," thought I.

I wrote of martial glories,
I painted bloody scenes,
I filled with thrilling stories
The penny magazines.



Vendor of Cheap Music. " 'ERE Y' ARE, LIDY! 'I'LL BE Y' SWEET'ART.' ONE PENNY!"

Heroic maids I mated
To fearless friends, or foes,
V.C.'s in scores created
And endless D.S.O.'s.

My heroes almost daily
Seized laagers, kopjes, neks;
They took their triumphs gaily,
I gaily took my cheques.

Life was a bed of roses—
I ventured to suppose—
But, ah! the scribe proposes,
The editors dispose.

When I was penning more tales,
They wrote me to suggest
That I should give my war tales
(To quote their phrase) "a rest."

The war had very few things
With which they had not dealt:
They felt the want of new things,
They did not want the veldt.

If I could write of China
(The latest craze), they'd see,
And perhaps would not decline a
Short manuscript from me.

I studied the *Mikado*,
The *Geisha* and *San Toy*;
And now an Eldorado
I'm hoping to enjoy.

For though no kopje's found here
In China's hills and dales,
There is a hunting ground here
Par excellence for tael.



A LITTLE DUOLOGUE ON THE QUAY AT BOULOCNE-SUR-MER.

CABLE BREVITIES.

SOME CODE EQUIVALENTS.

[*Exhibition Paris* publishes a short and convenient Code for wanderers who wish to telegraph personal details home to their anxious relatives. We are happy to supply a brief appendix.]

INADVERT = Got accidentally mixed up with a number of excursionists, including male relative, and find myself en route for Paris. Force majeure. Love.

INNOCUO = Reached Paris safely. Seventeen in carriage, mostly maires from Normandy. Must do Exhibition now that I am here. Don't be anxious on my account. Brought a little luggage, luckily.

STARVELING = No food obtainable except at famine prices. Twenty-two thousand

maires and their families responsible. Am developing Exhibition headache and grand prix corn.

STERTOROUS = Tired. Fell asleep across *plateforme mobile*, but woke abruptly on finding that my head was travelling eight kilometres per hour, while my feet were only going four. Had trouble with official, but matter now put right. Cash running low. Coming back as soon as possible. Love, as usual.

TERFSICHO = Stupidly missed train. Invited to attend curious dancing congress. Impolite to refuse, but returning promptly. Too stiff, except as spectator.

NOCTIVAGO = Every hotel crammed. *Conspuez* these twenty-two thousand provincial maires and their families! Love. Write soon—*poste restante*.

We may add a few for more general use:—

HITSIH = Where are you? Come back to Peking. All will be forgiven after decapitation. Hitiddlehiti!

KWANGXOTIC = Run away from the Aunt, thou sluggard. Have you got that ten-pound note?

LIUNHUNG = Too muchee bobbely—time can stop lie-pidgin. Allo samee, you wanchee plenty dollar bimeby, when Ally-man makee pay chop-chop. Chin-chin.

EXKRUGERO = Return at once to your sorrowing vrouw. You know I can't stand a sea voyage, and you have no right to go gallivanting away to Europe for a six months' trip. I never did trust that LEYDS. A nice mess you have made of it between you!

MR. SWINBURNE S'AMUSE.

SIR,—In the *Athenæum*—a paper I greatly respect,

In the last week of August appeared, as you may perhaps recollect,

A matter of two or three columns of verse on "Hawthorn Tide,"

And I read them and felt that I also could write like that if I tried.

It was Mr. SWINBURNE who wrote them, and this was the metre he used.

The words and the rhymes were there all right, but the thought was confused, And the lines went rippling along and the columns melted away,

And the poet sang on, sang on; but, alas, he had nothing to say!

When I reached this depressing conclusion I said, "I will write Mr. Punch,

In the short space of time intervening between my breakfast and lunch,

A stanza or two on the weather—which happens to-day to be fine—

In the self-same metre, and hope that he'll pay me a guinea a line.

I'll employ an abundance of epithets, not less than two to each noun,

And my skill at alliteration shall fairly astonish the town;

No one unmoved shall read my lines in hovel or hall—

Indeed, it's exceedingly likely that no one will read them at all!

'Fair and sublime in the sky,' I shall cry, 'the sun of September swings,

'And the sky's and the sea's sun fades not as fade the kingdoms of kings,

'For the triumph of time and the ravin of rhyme possess not nor hold

'The light of the leaf of the wet woods' wonder, the gleam of its gold!

'The stars and the suns give thanks for the glory bestowed and beholden,' "

Et cetera, et cetera. But, hark, the clock strikes one,

And I mustn't forget that though speech is silver silence is golden,

And though he that runs may read there be many that will not run!

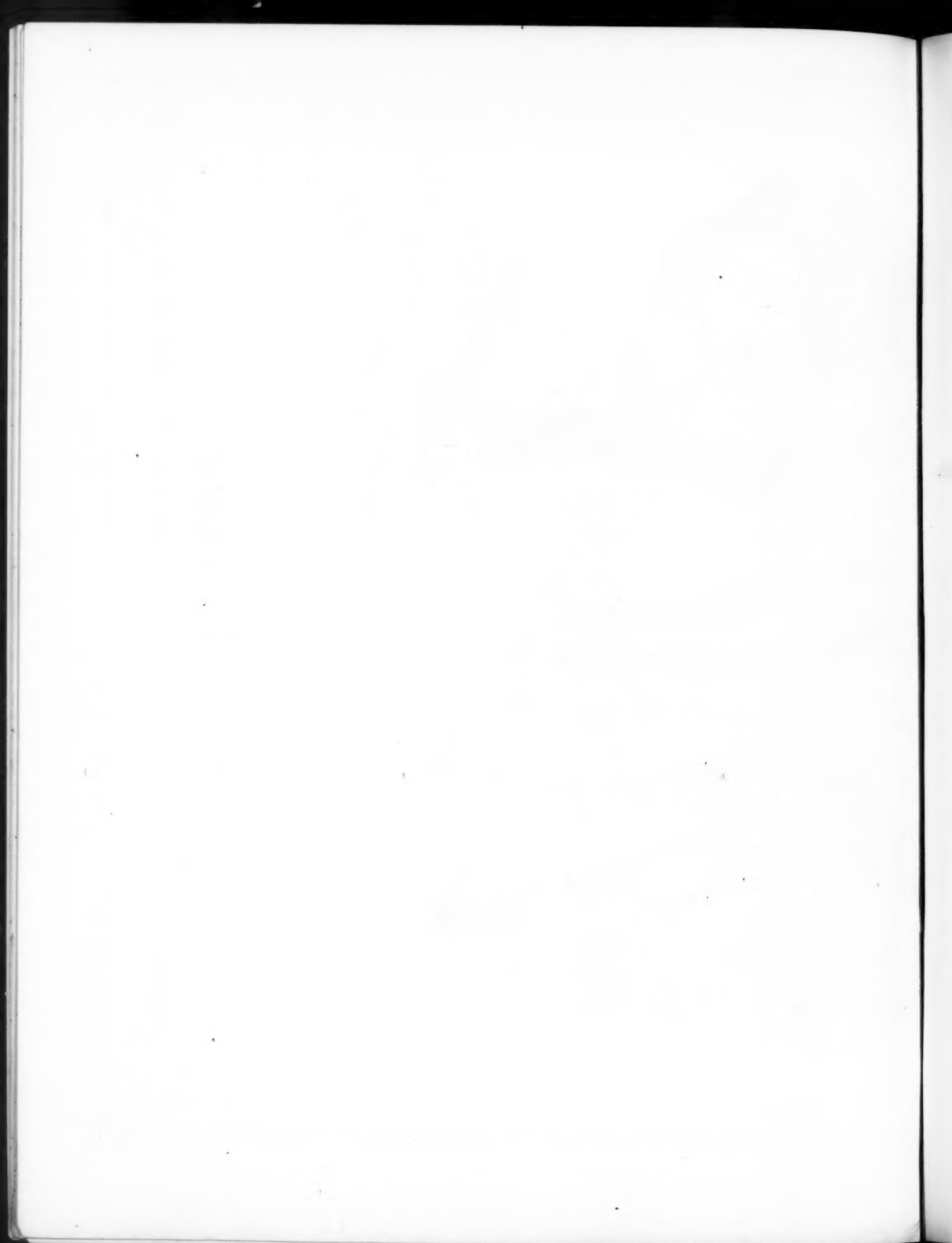




SWAIN SC

THE CHALLENGE.

CHAMBERLAIN (THE SQUIRE). "NAY, GOOD MY LORD, METHINKS THESE VARLETS HAVE NO CHAMPION. THEY DO EET FIGHT WITH ONE ANOTHER."



THE TABLETS OF AZIT-TIGLETH-MÍPHANSI, THE SCRIBE.



FOURTH FRAGMENT.

1. Now in the land of the Pigh-Taels,
 2. who dwelt in *pigh-ódurs*, inside of the Great Wall,
 3. the growers of finger-nails,
 4. whose faces were yellow, with prominent cheek-bones,
 5. and their eyes interfered with by
 6. curious eyelids
 7. did great trouble arise.
 8. They felt some objection, for reasons not stated,
 9. to being divided
 10. up into allotments
 11. and parcelled out broadcast among all the Pouáhs.
 12. They shared with the Séssils, the dwellers at Hátt-phild,
 13. A hatred of changes, a dread of the advent
 14. of modern improvements
 15. Then did they the Bôkhsahs, the wearers of scarlet,
 16. let loose in their millions
 17. ambassadors like birds in a cage
 18. held captive did hammer with
 19. *kruppans* and also with *krersohs* . . .
 20. and they wiped out the spreaders
 21. of foreign religions, the forerunners of gunboats,
 22. who had trustfully settled in places unsuited,
 23. with their wives and their children (excessive in numbers),
 24. the holders of classes on the brink of volcanoes
 25. Then did the Nations
 26. without undue hurry
 27. assemble their forces

28. and Djér-men-Emprah the Khaizr,
 29. on whose head dwelt the eagle,
 30. the Lord of the Mehl-i-Phist,
 31. the Hurler of thunderbolts,
 32. the Dealer of world-strokes
 33. delayed in transmission;
 34. the grandson of Er, whose rule
 35. was so widespread that it bothered the sunsets;
 36. the deviser of something distinctively novel
 37. in the way of moustaches,
 38. his forces did send out
 39. after stirring addresses made over the gunwale
 40. from the top of a ladder,
 41. and in *khaki* he had dressed them
 42. which was made in Djérmani, much more like *azbéstos*,
 43. rather given to shrink and become corrugated, when exposed to the weather; and
 44. in broad-brimmed *sombrérohs*
 45. just a bit out of drawing
 46. forth did he send them.
 47. And he straitly besought them
 48. to plant their feet firmly on the chest of the foeman
 49. their big dragon-crushers, imprinting their tread-mark
 50. and to always remember
 51. in spite of their costume,
 52. that they *really* were Djermans . . .
 53. Also the Brit-Ishtars, the Tel-am-arins; and the
 54. wearers of turbans [battle
 55. the Sikhs of the Punjáb, the lions in
 56. under Ghézli their chieftain
 did gather togethe

57. And over the seas came the soldiers of Loubéh
 58. of the Pálivu-phranséhs some interesting samples,
 59. the shruggers of shoulders, the Djestik-el-Étars
 60. And their brothers the Russkis, the Djinrali-ouffis,
 61. the Aikál - thatün, and Yuph-the-páipr,
 62. the Ámed-moujiks and also the Kosaks
 63. the subjects of Nikki the Tsah . . .
 64. and out of the land of Fuji-no-Yama, or otherwise Nippon,
 65. the Djapánis did hasten,
 66. the Bit-Jappis, the Bit-Nippis, all slinness and sinew
 67. with two-handed sword-hilts, the twisters of Pigh-Taels,
 68. all masters of carving and judges of china
 69. and the Yanki-dúdals
 70. the men of Mkinli . . . right there.
 71. but owing to barriers connected with language
 72. the troops of the nations were not over chatty. [belated,
 73. At length came Valdazeh, a trifle
 74. their trusty commander, with his Bhédékaz phrase-book
 75. well-thumbed on the voyage,
 76. And they stood at attention and their arms they presented.
 77. Then despite much translation and signals in dumb show
 78. they went on PRESENTING and couldn't be shifted. And
 79. Valdazeh said . . . or the Djérman equivalent.
 E. T. R.



Fair Customer. "No, I don't think I'll have this book. My husband says it is not fit for girls to read. Besides, it's very uninteresting."

THE BOOK OF BEAUTY.

A GREAT THOUGHT FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.
IN MONTHLY PARTS.

X.—THE JOHN OLIVER HOBBS SECTION.

(By permission and with sincerest compliments.)

SEPTEMBER 1ST, 2ND.—ROBERT was passing through that crisis which is inevitable with those in whom the ideals of childhood survive an ordered scheme of ambition. His head was his Party's; but his heart was in the "Kingdom under the sea," Lyonesse or another, not in the maps. He spent long hours of vigil over JULES VERNE'S *Twenty Thousand Leagues*, in the original. He almost persuaded himself to join the French navy and invent another *Nautilus*. It was at this period of his career that DISRAELI spoke of him as "the submarine incorruptible."

3RD TO 5TH.—Later it became evident that the Church would claim her own. *Dépayé* by arbitrary choice, his adopted name of PORRIDGE stood merely for the cooked article, the raw material being represented by his family name of HAUTEMILLE, a stock unrivalled in antiquity save by the CONFUCH and the TUBAL-CAINS; and to the last, even in intervals of the most exalted abstraction, he was a prey to poignant irritation when the comic journals (ever ready to play upon proper names) Anglicized it phonetically as HOATMEAL. He repeated the *Chanson de Roland* verbatim every night in bed. But the noblest portion of him was wrought of bronze (or else putty) Latinity. His brain reeled to the lilt of the rhyming Fathers. He would himself compose even secular verse in this medium. A post-mortem examination of his portfolios brought to light the following brochure:

Da me, Carole, in fugam;
Te sequente, precedam
Usque ad ecclesiam.*

6TH, 7TH.—"I will never believe," said POUBANA (speaking in fluent Dutch, but with a Siberian accent which betrayed his Trans-Ural habit of thought—his parentage was Levantine, with a Maltese cross on the mother's side, and he himself a reputed traveller in Swedish liqueurs), "I will never believe the Anglo-Teuton theory that the Latin races are doomed to perish, remaining extant in Alsace and the Channel Islands only. Solferino was a shock to that phantasy, and Fashoda will be its death-blow." (It will be remembered that Major MARCHAND was still a mere child at the date of this prophecy.)

8TH.—"And Spain," he cried, "romantic home of lost Carloses, and odorous onions, and impossible Armadas—shall she suffer her colonies to bow to the brutal invader? Never, while a breath is left in the swelling chests of her toreadors!" (This remark, again, is supposed to be made in 1860, prior to the late Cuban war, for which J. O. H., though American, is in no sort of way responsible.)

9TH TO 11TH.—For a growing girl, MIDGET's knowledge of the world showed a precocity which is only explicable by reference to her careful training in the seclusion of a convent. Of her life with Lady FITZ-BLOUSE she wrote:—"Consolatory platitudes exude from her brain with the facile fluency of her own saucy ringlets. Artlessness, in her case, has grown into an accomplishment so close to nature that it borders on sincerity. For answer, I fall back upon the history of the Bourbons. Really, the contemptuous attitude of these English toward uncrowned royalties is something appalling. Yesterday, in company of some pompous locals, to whom a foreign title is a thing *pour rire*, I was compelled, against my dearest principles, to play croquet. I stuck all the afternoon in the first hoop, wondering why I was an Archduchess. But I have not lived all these years without learning the value of self-repression. Remember me in your orisons."

12TH.—Opposition, with ROBERT, had been the very food and drink from which he had wrung the cud of a brooding personality. *Chew thyself* was his habitual rule of life. Mastered now by an indefinable sensation, made up of the elements of passion and brotherly love, and yet not strictly to be analysed as either, he found his occupation gone. The rarefied atmosphere of his new environment was too strong for him. No prig could hope to live in it—not comfortably.

13TH TO 15TH.—It will be convenient here to give a short extract of the very full notes taken by the deck-steward of the St. Malo packet during the extended prelude of ROBERT's abortive honeymoon. (In 1860 the progress of these vessels was marked by a much greater deliberation.) "'My experience of human nature,' I overheard the lady say, 'allows me to read your thoughts. Taught to indulge yourself in the gratification derived from self-sacrifice, you are suspicious of a Paradise which offers no useful scope for renunciation. You suffer the chagrin of not being a martyr to anything in particular.'

"'MIDGET,' replied the gentleman, 'you intrude upon the sanctity of my private soul. I am engaged just now over the enigma of a submerged identity.'

"'I knew it,' said the lady. 'There are obscure *penetrabilia* in your ethical system of which not even your wife is allowed the *entrée*. We may be married lovers, but we can never, never, be friends!'

"'Do not ask me to sate your curiosity,' said the gentleman. 'It would run into another six-shilling volume.'"
O. S.

(To be continued.)

* Dare we trace in this the original of that justly popular song, "*Chassez-me, Charlie*"?

A BAYARD FROM BENGAL.

Being some account of the Magnificent and Spanking Career of
Chunder Bindabun Bhosh, Esq., B.A., Cambridge.

BY BABOO HURRY BUNGSHO JABBERJEE, B.A.
Calcutta University.

(Author of "Jottings and Tittlings," &c., &c.,)

CHAPTER III.

THE INVOLUNTARY FASCINATOR.

Please do not pester me with unwelcome attentions,
Since to respond I have no intentions!

Your Charms are deserving of honorable mentions—
But previous attachment compels these abatentions!

"AN UNWILLING WOOED TO HIS WOOER."

Original unpublished Poem by H.B.J.

MR. BHOSH was very soon enabled to make his *début* as a pleader, for the *Mooktears* sent him briefs as thick as an Autumn leaf in Vallambrosa, and, having on one occasion to prosecute a youth who had embezzled an elderly matron, Mr. BHOSH's eloquence and pathos melted the jury into a flood of tears which procured the triumphant acquittal of the prisoner.

But the bow of Achilles (which, as Poet HOMER informs us, was his only vulnerable point) must be untied occasionally, and accordingly Mr. BHOSH occasionally figured as the gay dog in upper-class societies, and was not long in winning a reputation in smart circles as a champion bounder.

For he did greet those he met with a pleasant, obsequious affability and familiarity, which easily endeared him to all hearts. In his appearance he would—but for a somewhat mediocre stature and tendency to a precocious obesity—have strikingly resembled the well-known statuary of the Apollo Bellevue, and he was in consequence inordinately admired by aristocratic feminines, who were enthralled by the fluency of his small talk, and competed desperately for the honour of his company at their "Afternoon-At-Home-Teas."

It was at one of these exclusive festivities that he first met the Duchess DICKINSON, and (as we shall see hereafter) that meeting took place in an evil-ominous hour for our hero. As it happened, the honorable highborn hostess proposed a certain cardgame known as "Penny Napkin," and fate decreed that Mr. BHOSH should sit contiguous to the Duchess's Grace, who by lucky speculations was the winner of incalculable riches.

But, hoity toity! what were his dismay and horror, when he detected that by her legerdemain in double-dealing she habitually contrived to assign herself five pictured cards of leading importance!

How to act in such an unprecedented dilemma? As a chivalrous, it was repugnant to him to accuse a Duchess of sharpening at cards, and yet at the same time he could not stake his fortune against such a foregone conclusion!

So he very tactfully contrived by engaging the Duchess's attention to substitute his cardhand for hers, and thus effect the exchange which is no robbery, and she, finally observing his *finesse*, and struck by the delicacy with which he had so unostentatiously rebuked her duplicity, earnestly desired his further acquaintance.

For a time Mr. BHOSH, doubtless obeying one of those supernatural and presentimental monitions which were undreamt of in the Horatian philosophy, resisted all her advances—but alas! the hour arrived in which he became as SIMPSON with DELLAH.

It was at the very summit of the Season, during a brilliantly fashionable ball at the Ladbrooke Hall, Archer Street, Bayswater, whither all the *élites* of tiptop London Society had congregated.

Mr. BHOSH was present, but standing apart, overcome with bashfulness at the paucity of upper feminine apparel and designing to take his premature hook, when the beautiful

Duchess in passing surreptitiously flung over him a dainty noshandkerchief deliciously perfumed with extract of cherry blossoms.

With native penetration into feminine coquetties he interpreted this as an intimation that she desired to dance with him, and, though not proficient in such exercises, he made one or two revolutions round the room with her co-operation, after which they retired to an alcove and ate raspberry ices and drank lemonade. Mr. BHOSH's sparkling tittle-tattle completely achieved the Duchess's conquest, for he possessed that magical gift of the gab which inspired the tender passion without any connivance on his own part.

And, although the Duchess was no longer the chicken, having attained her thirtieth lustre, she was splendidly well preserved; with huge flashing eyes like searchlights in a face resembling the full moon; of tall stature and proportionate plumpness; most young men would have been puffed out by pride at obtaining such a tiptop admirer.

Not so our hero, whose manly heart was totally monopolised by the image of the fair unknown whom he had rescued at Cambridge from the savage clutches of a horned cow, and although, after receiving from the Duchess a musk-scented postal card, requesting his company on a certain evening, he decided to keep the appointed tryst, it was only against his will and after heaving many sighs.

On reaching the Duchess's palace, which was situated in Pembridge Square, Bayswater, he had the mortification to perceive that he was by no means the only guest, since the reception halls were thickly populated by gilded worldlings. But the Duchess advanced to greet him in a very kind, effusive manner, and, intimating that it was impossible to converse with comfort in such a crowd, she led him to a small side-room, where she seated him on a couch by her side and invited him to discourse.

Mr. BHOSH discoursed accordingly, paying her several high-flown compliments by which she appeared immoderately pleased, and discoursed in her turn of instinctive sympathies, until our hero was wriggling like an eel with embarrassment at what she was to say next, and at this point Duke DICKINSON suddenly entered and reminded his spouse in rather abrupt fashion that she was neglecting her remaining guests.

After the Duchess's departure, Mr. BHOSH, with the feelings of an innate gentleman, felt constrained to make his sincere apologies to his dual entertainer for having so engrossed his better half, frankly explaining that she had exhibited such a marked preference for his society that he had been deprived of all option in the matter, further assuring his dukeship that he by no means reciprocated the lady's sentiments, and delicately recommending that he was to keep a rather more lynxlike eye in future upon her proceedings.

To which the Duke, greatly agitated, replied that he was unspeakably obliged for the caution, and requested Mr. BHOSH to depart at once and remain an absentee for the future. Which our friend cheerfully undertook to perform, and, in taking leave of the Duchess, exhorted her, with an eloquence that moved all present, to abandon her frivolities and levities and adopt a deportment more becoming to her matronly exterior.

The reader would naturally imagine that she would have been grateful for so friendly and well-meant a hint—but oh, dear! it was quite the reverse, for from a loving friend she was transformed into a bitter and most unscrupulous enemy, as we shall find in forthcoming chapters.

Truly it is not possible to fathom the perversities of the feminine disposition!

(To be continued.)

GRATITUDE AT THE HAIRDRESSER'S.—Eton boy (who has just been relieved of some inches of down, to operator). Look here, I must give you a tip. I haven't had such a splendid shave for years!



THE Duc de MONTMIRAIL stepped from his cab while the clocks of Paris were striking eight, and having stopped a moment to argue with the driver, who asked him if he thought he was a gentleman, he turned disdainfully away to the courtyard of his sister's hotel.

"A gentleman, indeed!" cried the Duke, with much of indignation in his manner. "A gentleman—pooh! As if I should call myself anything so expensive. Go away, my good fellow—you are only wasting money here."

The cabman gathered his reins together angrily, and flourished his whip in no better temper.

"May your children grow up cabmen, and have you for a fare," said he in triumph; and with that shot he left the old man at the door of the Hôtel de Tournon, which, as all the world knows, is at the very corner of the Boulevard St. Germain and its lesser tributary the Boulevard d'Enfer.

The Duke entered the porch of the great house, and rang the bell loudly. He was very pleased with himself; pleased that he should come to Paris thus stealthily; pleased because he knew how very far from glad his sister would be to see him; pleased because he had saved fifty centimes at the expense of an impudent cabman.

"May my children grow up cabmen—ha, ha! If he knew that I have but one, and that she is a woman. My poor IRÈNE, you will not welcome papa to-night—not at all; you will be very angry. Twenty francs to bring me from Blois, and one franc fifty to a cabman. It was cheap at the price, my dear, cheap at the price."

He smiled to himself with the sardonic humour of his thoughts.

And he was still smiling when old CÉLESTIN opened the door to him, and nearly fell into the courtyard at the apparition he beheld.

"Name of Heaven—the Duke!"

"As you say CÉLESTIN, the Duke. He, he! are you not pleased, man—are you not pleased?"

CÉLESTIN pulled himself together very bravely, and stammered out his apology.

"Monsieur, how pleased I am! But Madame is not at home; she is—"

He was about to round off the lie, and to add "in the country," when the Duke handed him his valise and cut him short.

"At the house of Monsieur, the Comte DE BARRES, who to-morrow will be my son-in-law. Do not add to the burden of your sins, CÉLESTIN; they are expensive. I have come here from Blois to see my dear daughter. She, also, is in the country? Very well, we shall wait until she returns. If you would remain in this house, not a word of this to anyone. They think the old fellow is done for—sponged out, eh? They say that he has a bee in his bonnet, eh? Then we shall undeceive them to-morrow. Take me upstairs, high up, CÉLESTIN, to the stars. Let a portion of the marriage-feast be cooked, for I am hungry. When Madame la Baronne returns, say that no one has been here. Adhere to the story, CÉLESTIN, and when you die I will give the priest five francs to pray for your soul."

CÉLESTIN pinched himself to be sure that it was true; and when he had recovered his senses—for he was a quick-witted fellow—he conducted the Duke across the courtyard to the private door, and standing in the hall for a minute he began to conceive that audacious plan from which such surprising results were to spring.

"You prefer to dine upstairs, Monsieur?" he asked.

"Upstairs, certainly, CÉLESTIN—the best the cook can do?"

CÉLESTIN sighed.

"Ah, Monsieur, it has been very different since the Baron

died. Then, at any notice, a dinner for a prince; but now! Will Monsieur take a cutlet?"

The Duke answered him by turning the handle of the dining-room door, and looking into the room. A single gas jet illuminated the apartment; but this was all-sufficient to tell its story. Tables bearing their burden of blossoms and palms, silver candlesticks shining everywhere, rout seats, a raised platform for the orchestra, all the promise of a marriage-feast was there. The Duke regarded the scene with devouring eyes, and then turned to CÉLESTIN with a greedy leer.

"You think that I am blind, ah—well, do not speak any more of cutlets. A *potage à la purée*, a *fricassée* of lamb, a capon, and a little *pâté de foie gras*. I am a moderate man, CÉLESTIN. I am easily satisfied."

CÉLESTIN stifled the oath that rose to his lips (forgetting that an oath has nowhere else to rise to), and mounted the great staircase slowly. At the door of the *salon* upon the first floor, the Duke stopped again. Here the preparations for to-morrow were even more shameless. Hardly a stick of furniture remained in the drawing-room. Workmen were still busy, hanging draperies or watching others hang them. Hundreds of flowers in pots resented the garish light. One man with a mouth full of tin-tacks was trying to tell a story to another man with a knife between his teeth, and both failed dismally. A lank fellow, who had stood for a quarter of an hour with a hammer in his hand, looking for a convenient nail whereupon to employ it, yawned dismally and cried, "Very good." The old Duke chuckled softly as he took in the truth at a glance.

"Not a day too soon, CÉLESTIN, not an hour. If I had come to-morrow night, it would have been twenty-four hours too late. Admit that it is absurd for a father to say 'No,' twenty-four hours after the bride has said 'Yes.' We shall go upstairs, CÉLESTIN, and no one will know, not even my sister. To-morrow morning, the old fellow who does not count, who has a bee in his bonnet, who is crazy, will stand at the *mairie* with them; he will go to the altar. Name of the devil, he should know his way there, for he has buried—ah, how many has he buried, CÉLESTIN?"

CÉLESTIN, staggered at the question, could not remember the number of the Duke's wives, so he confessed that they were a "lot," and went on upstairs toward the stars as the old fellow had suggested. But there was an idea in CÉLESTIN's head now, and when he came to the landing of the second story, he paused to light a gas jet and to ask a question. "Twenty-four hours too late!" There was a wrinkle in that, surely! Why should not this old madman be twenty-four hours too late himself.

"You don't remember much about the Hôtel de Tournon, Monsieur?" he asked suddenly.

The Duke, puffing and blowing after his ascent, protested that he remembered nothing.

"Then it is all the same whether you sleep in the red room or the blue?"

"Or the black, or the white, or the pink, or the green. Where you please, CÉLESTIN, as long as it is a room."

CÉLESTIN rubbed his chin.

"Of course, it would have to be a room, that goes without saying. And where Madame la Baronne would know nothing. You would not wish Madame la Baronne to know anything, Monsieur?"

The Duke's eyes glittered.

"The old cat!" he exclaimed; "she said that I was mad. I will pull her claws in the morning. Show me the bedroom, and hold your tongue."

CÉLESTIN nodded his head; and when he had turned round, he closed his left eye twice, as much as to say, "I know the way."

The green room was at the very bottom of the great west corridor, and thither he went with quick steps; indeed, he had lighted half-a-dozen candles, and dusted a chair, and drawn back the hangings of the great bed almost before the Duke had toddled into the room after him.

"The green room, Monsieur, with the BOULE bed. You have heard of that, Monsieur?"

"Devil a word."

"Wonderful bed, made by CHARLES ANDRÉ BOULE, in the year 1730. Queens have slept in that bed, Monsieur."

The Duke leered, as he listened to the old servant's one historical fact.

"Send their ghosts to keep me company, CÉLESTIN. Tell them I have buried—let me see—how many have I buried? Well, it doesn't matter, for I am hungry. We will speak about the bed to-morrow when we get up to see the marriage. *Sacré bleu*—without my consent. You understand, man, they marry without my consent. But the code says, 'No'—the crazy old fellow says, 'No.' He will say 'No' at the *mairie*, CÉLESTIN."

CÉLESTIN sighed.

"You would break Mademoiselle's heart, Monsieur."

"My good fellow, a woman is worth nothing until her heart has been broken two or three times. She will find a better man. The Comte DE BARRES—faugh! He said that I was mad!"

"They all said that, Monsieur."

"Ah, did they? Very well, they shall pay the bill to-morrow. Go and see to the dinner, CÉLESTIN. I will show you how a madman can drink Bordeaux. The best you have in the cellar, my man. Do not forget that I am the twenty-fifth Duke of MONTMIRAIL. To-morrow, when I go away, I will give you——"

CÉLESTIN became greatly interested.

"You will give me, Monsieur——"

"My blessing, CÉLESTIN."

He sat down in one of the arm-chairs with the words, finding them very comfortable companions, and CÉLESTIN left the room indignantly. Outside on the landing, the old servant stood for a little while on the best of terms with himself and his idea.

"He'd stop the marriage to-morrow, would he? He'd break

Mademoiselle IRENE's heart? Well, there's two opinions about that, and I've got the right to one of 'em. Mad—he's as mad as—"

He paused for a simile, but finding one presently, he added, "as mad as dogs," and with that he went downstairs to tell JULES, the cook, that the crazy old duke had escaped from Blois, and was already upstairs crying out for his dinner. To which JULES answered by putting exactly one teaspoonful of salt too much into the soup, and declaring that he was desolated.

"Desolated or not desolated, it's him or his shadow up in the green-room, my boy, and to-morrow morning he'll go to the Mayor as sure as I'm eating quail *au gratin*. And that's not to be denied, JULES."

Seeing that CÉLESTIN had a quail in one hand and the bread-crumbs in the other, JULES made no attempt to dispute so self-evident a proposition; but basting a bird tenderly, he appealed at the same time to his patron saint, which a listener might have supposed to be the devil.

"*Sacré bleu*," he asked at last, "who let him out of the asylum, then?"

"Do not trouble your head with riddles. The question is, who is going to put him back again."

"It will kill Mademoiselle."

"And Madame; she will die too."

"And Monsieur le Comte, who loves Mademoiselle so much that he never goes to the private door at the opera now. I know, for I was there all last week."

"You always do the right thing, JULES."

"Ha, ha! I know when the world turns on its own axis, my boy."

"Then I wish you'd give it a spin to-night, and make this old chap dizzy. He wants his dinner."

"The word that makes humanity, my boy, our 'dinner.' But we live a hundred years too late. There is the guillotine after the coffee which disagrees with you. It cannot be done, my friend; it cannot be done."

CÉLESTINE helped himself to another quail.

"Give him the Bordeaux we didn't like last night, and a bit of the leavings from breakfast. I'll go and tuck him up just now, and see what can be done."

"Ah, mon CÉLESTIN, what a head you have!"

CÉLESTIN screwed up one eye slowly.

"I've a daughter of my own, and I know," he said. "If anything happened to Mademoiselle to-morrow, I should—"

"Kill yourself. Brave fellow."

CÉLESTIN had been going to say "give notice," but he took the credit of the insinuation and added—

"Well, perhaps. The honour of this house is mine. I feel as though one of my own were going to the altar to-morrow. And go she shall, JULES; go she shall."

JULES beat a dish of eggs at lightning speed.

"You will tell Madame nothing?"

"Nothing!"

"But if he comes down in the morning—"

"He will not come down in the morning."

"Ah, you risk all—noble fellow. I will carry your secret to the grave."

CÉLESTIN sighed.

"There have been a good many secrets carried there—for the world to enjoy. Come, whip up the victuals for this old cock, and let me have done with him. He's in the green room, JULES."

JULES put down the spoon, and stared with eyes wide open.

"The green room—ah, you believe in that, then?"

"I believe in nothing, until I see it. If it's true, it's true; if it isn't true, it isn't true. What I know, I know; you can't get over that, my boy."

JULES admitted that you could not get over it, and began reluctantly to warm up the soup and make the sauce for Old Crackpot. He knew that there was a story of the Boule bed; but, like all the rest of the world, he did not believe in it. For how could a mere bed work miracles, or drive men crazy, or make them doubt their senses, as this bed was supposed to do? It was all nonsense, the good cook said. The Duke would come down to-morrow morning, and there would be a scene at the altar. JULES uttered a pious inspiration that the sauce would poison the eater, and with that served up the dinner.

At eleven o'clock that night, CÉLESTIN, craning his neck over the banisters upon the second floor of the Hôtel de Tournon, beheld Madame la Baronne, and IRENE, her niece, returning from the *soirée* at the house of the Comte de BARRES. Though he was a little hard of hearing, and could not stoop to keyholes as in the days of his manly youth, nevertheless the old servant gathered sufficient fragments of their talk to assure himself that the ladies had enjoyed themselves, and were quite in ignorance of the fact that the elderly Duc had escaped from his retreat at Blois. For the matter of that, pretty IRENE was flushed and rosy, and at no pains to conceal the excitement which anticipation of to-morrow brought to her. CÉLESTIN shook his head when he watched her enter the bed-room where the marriage robe was already spread. He wondered what would happen if he went downstairs and said—"Mademoiselle, your papa, the Duke, is in the green room." Such a course would have meant hysterics, and upon hysterics tears. "And tears I do not like to see, where females are concerned," he added philosophically.

"The last time, my dear," he said to himself; "the last time that you'll sleep in that little room, and get up in the morning to hear JEANETTE knocking at your door. Well, if it were as easy undone as it's done, some of us wouldn't be what we are by a long way—not by a long way. And to think that Old Crackpot has come up to put a spoke in your wheel! I'd like to strangle him—that's what I'd like to do."

(Continued in our next.)